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ABSTRACT

This paper describes issues involved in increasing the number of Native American students in higher education, with a specific focus on psychology and rehabilitation training programs. The paper also describes many specific strategies for use by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Native American students. Three sections cover strategies to improve recruitment, strategies to improve retention, and model programs and best practices. Recruitment geared towards minorities is different from the recruitment of Anglo students. Strategies include tailoring the admissions process to fit the needs of Native American culture, addressing bias in admission standards, beginning recruitment early, making recruiters aware of minority issues, advertising culturally appropriate programs and support services, and involving Native communities in recruitment efforts. While recruiting minority students can be a challenge, retaining them in school can be even more difficult for institutions. Students face four main potential barriers that affect retention: financial need, the environment of the institution, student characteristics, and academic support. Many specific examples of programs that can aid in the retention of minority students are described. The section on model programs and best practices suggests that rather than reinvent the wheel, models that have been used previously and have reported positive outcomes can be replicated. Programs that have been implemented in North Dakota, California, New York, Arizona, Florida, and Ohio are highlighted. (Contains 34 references.) (CDS)

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Executive Summary

Timothy C. Thomason, Ed.D.
Hanna J. Thurber, M.A.

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American Indian Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe the issues involved in increasing the number of Native American students in higher education, with a specific focus on psychology and rehabilitation training programs. This paper also describes many specific strategies for use by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Native American students. It has been well established that there must be more Native American psychologists, mental health counselors, and rehabilitation counselors if the Native American population is to be served more adequately. Many of the strategies described are also applicable to other ethnic minority groups.

The general issue of improving the recruitment and retention of Native American students in higher education is complicated by the many different aspects of both the lives of the students and higher education. Cultural, familial, individual, educational, professional and financial issues all have an effect on the recruitment and retention of Native American students. The inhibiting factors may discourage minority students from pursuing higher education, and then the multicultural composition of colleges and universities suffers. Fortunately, the staff and faculty of many colleges and universities are actively interested in reaching out to Native American students and helping them matriculate. Today, many colleges have special programs specifically designed to recruit and retain Native American students.

Native Americans face the challenge of adapting to higher education institutions which have a primarily European-American orientation. Being a minority person within a social and academic setting based on Anglo values

often constitutes a barrier. In order to improve the recruitment and retention of Native American students, everyone involved in the process must become more aware of the potential barriers and how they can be overcome. It is important to recognize that recruitment and retention efforts will not be very successful unless they are made a priority and given adequate resources. Improving recruitment is a long-term process, and requires the commitment of the college or university administration, as well as faculty and staff.

Wells (1989) described four factors which hinder the collegiate achievement of Native Americans: inadequate preparation; inadequate adjustment to the college environment; personal and family problems; and financial difficulties. Each of these factors can be broken down into more specific issues. For example, personal and family problems include the lack of family support, homesickness, substance abuse, the desire to stay on the reservation, maintenance of cultural identity, inadequate transportation, and difficulty with the college bureaucracy. Sometimes students are met with opposition or apprehension from their families regarding higher education. Pepion (1991) reported that less than half (46%) of Native American students are single and there is often a high degree of conflict between academic requirements and family responsibilities; 44% of Native American students reported high stress resulting from marital problems. Along with students' personal stresses the adjustment to the college environment and inadequate preparation creates additional barriers to success in college.

Within the helping professions there are barriers to recruiting and retaining American Indian students, but these barriers are not necessarily program specific. It is estimated that by the year 2000, 30% of our national population will consist of persons of color. Currently the percentage of minority psychologists is only 5% to 6% (APA, 1995). The under-

representation of psychologists of color is especially problematic because people of color tend to be over-represented as clients in those public settings where psychologists are typically found. In order to provide Native Americans and members of other minorities with appropriate care, training programs for the helping professions must find ways to attract more minority students to their programs. It is the responsibility of the programs to promote the correct information and to clarify any misguided or incorrect information that individuals might have. For example, the lack of exposure to psychology in community colleges and the belief that an undergraduate degree in psychology is not marketable creates an under representation of minorities in these fields (Puente, 1993).

Along with lack of exposure to the fields of psychology and rehabilitation, Native Americans also face the problem of integrating their beliefs with the profession and fitting into the academic environment. Mental health is viewed in different ways among Native American cultures, and some of the standard psychological theories and techniques are inappropriate for use with Native Americans. Counselors and therapists need to learn appropriate techniques for different cultures, and these techniques should be included in the education and preparation of upcoming professionals.

Though there are many barriers and difficult situations to overcome, the situation is not hopeless. Higher education can adopt new ideas and programs that tackle some of the barriers that decrease the numbers of Native American students in psychology and rehabilitation programs. Colleges and universities can be more encouraging by developing special orientation and retention programs, recruiting older students, and including the families of Native American students in recruitment and retention activities (LaCounte,

1987). College faculty and staff can benefit by learning how cultural differences affect students and how responsive graduate programs can adapt to the unique cultural issues of Native American cultures.

The limited number of minority students in undergraduate programs directly affects graduate school programs. Pepion (1991) reported that only 4% of students enrolled in graduate school were Native American, and only 2% of them actually completed graduate school. In an article titled "The Nation, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (1993) reported that in 1991 American Indians made up only 0.5% of the recipients of doctoral degrees in the United States. An article by T.J. Cola in *Indian Country Today* (1994) reported that only 0.4% of the psychology doctorates in 1993 were Native American. Kenneth Poocha completed a study for the University of Arizona looking at Native American graduation and persistence rates. Only three Native American students graduated within four years out of 103 students. Many Native American students left with a GPA less than a 2.0 and the typical graduation rates are about 25 to 30%, as compared to 54% of all others (University of Arizona, 1996).

Student numbers are not the only important recruitment and retention factor in regards to the minority population in higher education. The limited number of minority staff plays a large part in minority students' hesitancy to attend college. The total number of Native American full-time employees on college campuses based on 3,300 college reports was only 8,200 out of 1,786,569 positions in 1991-1992 academic year. Nationally, less than one percent of the faculty of institutions of higher education were Native American. Increasing the number of Native Americans on campus and incorporating Native American culture into academic and social activities are ways to increase retention and improve recruitment. Students want to have

role models and someone from their own cultural background with whom to relate. "The population of Indian students in this study overwhelmingly perceive the presence of Indian faculty and staff as being very important" (Pepion, 1991).

In addition to increasing the number of Native American faculty and staff on campus, more attention to minority issues and experiences needs to be incorporated into university life. A serious concern for all of higher education is that members of minorities may find it difficult to keep their ethnic values and norms. For example, for a minority student in psychology it might be desirable for them to get encouragement to utilize their own cultural healing methods when appropriate (Cervantes, 1988). To require members of minority cultures to adapt to the majority culture in higher education is a disservice to all. Someone cannot be successful in a system where their values are not respected enough to be provided tolerance and acceptance. "If we want American Indian students to be able to compete in the white man's world, we must support them in achieving their unique power and potentiality" (Hill, 1991). To successfully incorporate minorities into our universities we must embrace them and their culture.

Strategies to Improve Recruitment

Recruitment is a process that all universities and colleges spend a great deal of time and money on. After all, there would be no use for a school without students. Recruitment includes the process of inquiry, application, admission and acceptance (Issac, 1986). Part of the recruitment effort is usually focused on bringing in minority students to provide a more diverse learning environment. Recruitment geared towards minorities is different from the recruitment of Anglo students. To successfully recruit minority

students, in particular Native American students, a different approach must be considered.

Paul Issac (1986) answered the question, "Why recruit minorities?" with three points: (1) Not all qualified minority students will apply to graduate school; (2) Minorities can make unique contributions to psychology, and among other professions; and, (3) U.S. demographics are changing (minorities are becoming a larger proportion of the population).

Since our country's demographics are changing, the demographics of higher education and professional jobs must change as well. To meet these new standards and changes in higher education, a different type of recruitment process is needed. Dolence (1991) stated "Recruitment and the student enrollment decision processes rest on two primary sets of variables, one related to students and the other to the institution." To stay competitive in the area of higher education, institutions will have to address both sets of variables in relation to the minority recruitment process that includes admission criteria, increasing the pool of applicants, and using more appropriate recruitment strategies.

Before a university can recruit or retain students, admission standards should be addressed. There are many factors that limit the pool and can make admission to a university difficult for Native American students. Adams (1988) suggested four ways to increase the number of Native American students admitted into higher education:

- Involve minority faculty and students on admissions committees;
- Consider qualitative data;
- Make admissions and financial aid decisions simultaneously; and,
- Use assistantships.

The financial aid part of the admissions process is extremely important. It is a major stress for students and can be a deciding factor of whether to go to college or which institution to attend. For many minority students the use of grants and not loans is important (Pruitt, 1989). Loans are not an incentive to attend school, but grants and scholarships are. In addition to these general ideas, Adams and Wadsworth (1989) suggested several things to better serve Native Americans in the admissions process of graduate schools:

- Identify potential impediments such as GRE scores;
- Produce well prepared undergraduate students; and,
- Persuade departments to change the focus in admissions:
  - (a) Review admissions criteria for relevance to performance and,
  - (b) Provisionally admit students and then matriculate them into the program if requirements are met.

It is important that the admissions process be tailored to fit the needs of Native American culture and personality characteristics. Cultural bias and misunderstanding can affect the admittance rate for minority students. Affirmative Action policies were created to protect minorities from being discriminated against. In a study done with minority graduate students, most of them strongly supported student affirmative action and thought it should continue (Ponterotto, Martinez, & Hayden, 1986).

Focus on our own culture or misunderstandings about other cultures may bias the admissions process for minority students. This may not be intentional. Different speech patterns and writing styles may be foreign to the admissions committee members if they are of different ethnic origin from the student. This is why it is so important to involve minorities on the

admissions committee and to have committee members stay attuned to potential biases. For this reason, Pruitt (1989) recommended the careful evaluation of interviews, recommendations, and autobiographical statements from Native Americans. Schools should be prepared to assist minorities with understanding paperwork, deadlines and other red tape (or what some Native Americans call "white tape"). To aid Native Americans in the admissions process, Hammond and Yung (1993) suggested that the admissions offices clarify the procedures and provide assistance with completing forms.

Once the admissions process is in place, the next step is to actually admit students. Recruitment should begin early to encourage Native Americans to consider higher education. Early intervention programs are key to increasing interest and desire within the American Indian population to attend undergraduate or graduate level programs. Generally, students who persist in undergraduate education made their decision to attend college early. This suggests the need to recruit early for graduate school as well. People who were interviewed expressed concern that belated recruitment of Native American students who were not college-bound hampers the students' ability to succeed (Benjamin, Chambers & Reiterman, 1993).

Starting to recruit early is just one idea of how to increase minority enrollment. A survey of Native American undergraduates suggested ten ideas that will improve recruitment. These ideas can be adapted to fit any minority population:

1. Early intervention in public schools can include programs that bring students of all ages from public schools to a university for an orientation to campus life.

2. Summer " bridge" programs can offer a head start to at-risk students to let them adjust and get ahead before they start the school year.
3. Tailor financial aid programs to provide grants and scholarships for Native American students.
4. Provide academic assessment programs.
5. Increase the availability of tutoring services to Native American students.
6. Intrusive academic advising (e.g. advisors should follow up with students and try to find courses that have a Native American professor or focus that meets program of studies requirements).
7. Realistic career guidance should be offered.
8. Counseling and advisement should be strengthened.
9. Native American student organizations and academic programs can be strengthened and expanded.
10. Extension programs, on or near reservations, are needed to serve adult Native American students who have long been neglected (Wells, 1989).

In addition to institutional programs and support, the recruiters themselves need to be aware of minority issues to successfully recruit minority students. An effective recruiter should be an advocate for minority students and faculty and develop support from senior level administrators. Such an advocate can generate enthusiasm by interacting effectively and sensitively with students (Boone, Young, & Associates, 1984).

A less traditional but effective recruiting approach is to employ minority faculty and students in the recruiter positions. The faculty and students from different programs can host "open houses" and develop materials about the

academic programs, residence life, and financial aid, all geared towards minorities (Adams, 1988). Specific to the graduate level, Pruitt (1989) provides excellent suggestions aimed at increasing the pool of minority students, and this information may be adapted and used at different levels of higher education:

(1) Bring minority undergraduates into contact with academic role models;
(2) Improve the quality of educational experience for minorities in predominantly white schools;
(3) Students can be counseled on the importance of graduate study;
(4) Lower the college dropout rate through interventions;
(5) Recruit minority college graduates in the workplace;
(6) Recruit minorities with degrees from one's own university;
(7) Work to improve elementary and secondary education; and,
(8) Continuous exposure of graduate faculty to minority undergraduates and their professors is essential.

The rest of the recruiting process is influenced by personal factors of the students. Student variables that affect the recruiting process are: "ability, socioeconomic background, input from influential advisers, aspirations and values, geographical considerations, high school characteristics, and expectations about college..."(Dolence, p. 14, 1991). The more the recruiters and faculty consider these factors and empathize with the cultural differences, the more effective the recruitment process will be. Native American reservations have a need for more people trained in the psychology field, but

many American Indians are unaware of this career possibility (McShane, 1988).

Institutions must work with reservation officials and programs to recruit more people into the field of helping professions. Looking at the mental health field directly, Trimble stated, "We need more well trained Indian psychologists; their training should not be restricted to mainstream styles, tactics, and intervention approaches, for they must believe and feel that what they are learning and practicing is culturally relevant" (Trimble, p. 46, 1991). It is the responsibility of the institution to make these types of learning experiences available so the reconciliation of the minority culture and educational environment is as smooth as possible.

Institutions can use alternative teaching methods to provide culturally appropriate programs. Native American students can benefit from using books and materials about Native Americans in class, having Native faculty, having Native counselors, learning about Native Americans in class, going to places and events that are special to Native Americans, and just having a chance to be at a university with other Native Americans (Pepion, 1991). An ethnic minority student who is considering college is likely to find the above scenario more appealing and academically stimulating than a traditional Anglo-oriented educational environment.

To complement personal contacts between the minority students and the university during the recruitment process, information should be supplied to the prospective students. McGovern (1993) suggested the development of brochures targeted toward high school and early major students as well as videotapes targeted towards ethnic minority students. Outside the institution and student is an external network. This network includes the community and work related aspects of recruiting. Schools

benefit from making use of the community and businesses by looking for candidates in these settings. Using the media may also provide opportunities to show off the university and attract students who were not aware of the opportunities higher education provide (Clark & Cheng, 1993). This external network may also be useful to recruit students through their organizations, such as: minority alumni, professional groups, minority organizations, religious groups, social organizations, community centers, counseling centers, and organized minority recruitment networks (Boone et. al, 1984). Utah State University has developed The American Indian Support Project, which provides their psychology graduate program with a successful recruitment program. This program includes recruitment activities that connect the university, the student, and the community. The program uses these recruitment activities:

- Literature is distributed throughout the Bureau of Indian Affairs mental health branches;
- Articles on the program are published in newspapers;
- The program is highlighted at national conferences;
- Organizations such as American Indian Psychologists and American Indian Psychology Graduate Students;
- The focus is placed on recruiting from specific tribes; and,
- The creation of a network of psychology department undergraduate advisors in colleges near reservations (McShane, 1991).

Community resources may also be used to improve the recruitment and retention of Native Americans. Tapping into the perceptions of community needs can provide Native American students with the aspiration

to become psychologists. For Native Americans, culture, family and community are extremely important, and this fact can be used to recruit students. Many Native Americans are not aware of the diversity of professions available, or what is needed to pursue them. Tribal governments and Indian organizations can provide unique work opportunities. The desire to serve their families, community and culture often provides the motivation to obtain a college degree (Beaulieu, 1991). It would also be beneficial to have the Native American community and family give their blessing for the student to pursue higher education and a professional career. Students need to know it is good to pursue an education. Families can acknowledge this need by performing appropriate ceremonies by providing active family support, or by seeking support from community members who have been or are now in higher education.

General strategies are important in the overall attitude and position of the institution, but there are specific strategies already being used in recruiting minority students. It has been identified that early recruitment is very important in the recruitment of Native American students. Traditional recruitment strategies may lose their effectiveness if they are not geared towards minorities, if the recruitment information is highly rehearsed or if the minorities are under-represented.

High school recruitment strategies geared specifically toward minority students are more effective than waiting until students are out of high school. These types of recruitment processes include utilizing individuals with dual relationships to the university and high schools, as well as special programs involving students directly with university. At the 1995 Minority Student Today Conference at San Antonio, a list was provided that described some alternative recruiting methods:

A. School Sources

1. Teachers are good recruitment sources especially for their alma mater or schools that their family members attend or attended in the past. Also, a college presentation held in an academic class sometimes reaches a larger group of students than one that requires students to miss class and to need a written excuse from class.
2. Former students provide a more socially oriented perspective to students, but this information is what students are most interested in, and a presentation from a recent graduate may be very effective in sparking interest in attending college.

B. Non-School Sources

1. Alumni may take the place of an admissions officer if properly oriented.
2. Alumni, parents, and relatives of college students, teachers, and other community members supportive of college can be instrumental in creating interest, especially if the family of the student is resistant to letting the child leave home.
3. Community sources, civic organizations, or respected community members can help motivate students to attend college.

Programs that are specific to a particular population of students are called bridge programs. They promote interest in higher education and provide special support and assistance to at-risk students in specific areas. For example, Northern Michigan University focuses its bridge program on Native American middle school students. It involves tribal education

committees, and its mission is to provide an expectation to go to college and a chance for Native American students to expand their horizons. It is a three summer program involving three universities and it includes a variety of higher learning experiences.

Transfer students are another population of students with a unique position. Recruiting these students involves a different process than recruiting freshman students. Students who transfer from a community college to a large university sometimes have difficulty adjusting. To support these students effectively, some schools have implemented special programs to simplify the process. At the RETAIN conference at the University of Arizona (1996), some programs already working with transfer students provided research and ideas involving recruiting and retaining transfer students. Two programs that provided recruitment issues were discussed by Dr. Linda Morris, from the University of Idaho and by Dr. Wilma Soroosh, who heads a "Bridge the Gaps" program. The University of Idaho program addresses transition problems from a tribal college to a university and presents a model program for a Forestry B. S. degree for Native American students. The Bridge the Gaps program completed a study on the effectiveness of a community college program designed for Native Americans. The findings and recommendations were made to improve the recruitment, retention and graduation rates of the community college and prepare students for university transfer (University of Arizona, 1996).

Strategies to Improve Retention

Recruiting more minority students into higher education is a challenge, but retaining them in school can be even more difficult for the institutions. Information about what to expect can be given to the students

and a wide range of services can be offered, but following through with the students is a difficult, expensive, time consuming and sometimes exasperating job. And yet, it must be done. It is easy believe that if someone needs help they are responsible for finding it, and they will seek help if they want it. Though this is to some extent true, and some students will seek help when they are in need, many others will not due to a variety of factors. Students who are having trouble will sometimes feel hopeless and lost. They may not know what services exist. They may be embarrassed, afraid to be labeled or concerned that information about their problems will get back to families, communities or professors. Since there are so many different reasons why students might not seek help it would be unfair of the institution to ignore the need for outreach to students. Nevertheless, the institution is responsible for the retention of its minority students, since the premise behind recruitment and retention is to increase or maintain the number of minority students at the institution.

Colleges and universities exist to provide an education that includes basic academic and student services, and these services need to be adjusted to meet minority students' needs. "Effective student retention [requires] cooperation and collaboration between the academic and student affairs areas" (Dolence, p. 16, 1991). To improve retention in higher education, many factors need to be taken into consideration. The success of retention programs depends on intensified recruiting, advising, counseling, early warning prediction, extracurricular activities, faculty mentoring, financial aid, housing, academic support, and policy changes (Cervantes, 1988). Problems occur when programs do not get information to the students about services or the programs are not accessible to the students. A program may succeed if it effectively supports the students; student affairs programs are a high priority

on campus, they are high profile, and they can effectively guide students through their education. This type of program can truly make a positive impact on retention and assisting students with the problems they face.

Students face four main potential barriers that affect retention: financial need, the environment of the institution, student characteristics, and academic support. Almost any aspect of an institution can make a difference in the retention of minority students and can be adapted to be more effective regarding retention. The successful retention of Native American students in higher education must be an institution-wide priority. "It must foster a supportive and nurturing environment, focused on the full development of the student, and involve effective academic advising" (Dolence, p. 16, 1991). At the RETAIN Conference in 1996 on the University of Arizona campus, many good suggestions were made for improving services to Native Americans. For example, Native American retention programs should be better funded at the institutional level to be more stable, partnerships with the community should be improved, and cross-cultural training should be provided for staff and faculty.

The literature has emphasized the importance of identifying areas that can be changed to improve the retention for minority students. The next step in the process is to understand how to do so. Retention improvement is an ever-changing subject. Ideas can be adapted to fit different populations or academic environments. However the information is used, the important thing to remember is to look, listen, learn and follow through:

- **Look** at the minority population you have present at the institution and determine the population you wish to recruit.

- **Listen** to the minority students' needs, concerns and issues, whether positive or negative.
- **Learn** ways to effectively support the students, continue doing the positive things identified, and address the negative issues and related concerns.
- **Follow through** on the ideas and the identified issues. Set up guidelines and procedures to establish ways to address issues on a continuing basis.

Financial aid is a student service that can be tailored to fit minority needs. The retention of minority students in the program can be dependent on funding. "Programs with the highest minority enrollment, with one exception, provided a minimum of 40% of their minority students with institutional financial aid. The program with the highest minority enrollment provided financial support to all its students" (McHolland, Lubin, & Forbes, p.145, 1990).

Financial support has been identified as a main concern for American Indian students. Advising American Indian students financially requires the advisor to be attuned to a unique definition of need and to provide services that are sensitive to Native American students' circumstances (Beaulieu, 1991). Examples are the rules and regulations of financial aid. Time limits for completion and lump sum disbursements are areas that might need some special consideration when working with Native Americans (Knapp, 1991). It would be very helpful to have a Native American in the financial aid office to help with these kinds of issues (LaCounte, 1987).

Making Native American and other minority students important members of the university system is essential in improving retention rates.

Universities should provide five types of experiences to improve retention and graduation among American Indians (Issac, 1986):

(1) Affirmative Action Committee;
(2) Activities tailored for minority students;
(3) Minority student organizations;
(4) Program sensitivity (e.g., awards, minority issues on curriculum and training, minority related research topics and conferences on minority mental health); and,
(5) Minority faculty.

Classes should include minority issues, and classes should be offered that have a minority perspective. Harles suggested including American Indian topics into the curriculum (University of Arizona, 1996). For example, a history class could incorporate a presentation from Native American students or faculty on their perspective of the Anglo expansion into this continent, or a Hispanic professor could discuss his cultures' perspective on immigration into the United States

Four specific methods to improve retention are: including students' families in programming; providing consistent faculty feedback; providing opportunities for students to learn new technologies; and teaching about minority cultures at the university (University of Arizona, 1996). Overall, the inclusion of minority issues and needs promotes more minority involvement in the institution. For Native American students, the existence of Native American studies programs has been crucial. "Students need to feel they can be a part of the institution and that it is in some way responsive to their interests" (Kidwell, p.23, 1991). McHolland et. al. (1990) have provided a

description of programs used previously to promote institutional change. They also include with the list the names of the schools because they have materials that may prove helpful to other programs. Many of these ideas are specific to the discipline of psychology and related fields, but they may be adapted to fit other programs of study:

- An open house for prospective minority students, including a specific statement of commitment to minority students;
- A resource manual for Black psychology students that is made available to all Black students;
- External newsletter articles on minority events at the school;
- Ethnic and racial sensitizing experiences for faculty, administration, staff, and students;
- The Black and Hispanic Caucus; and,
- External consultants used to assist a program in focusing on ethnic and multicultural issues.

The more informal interaction between faculty and students, the more retention increases. Faculty can function as cultural brokers by providing students with skills to function in the mainstream without devaluing their culture (Pipes, Westby, & Inglebert, 1993). Minority students are required to swim against the tide in the sea of the majority. By increasing the number of minority students and faculty as well as providing a positive learning environment, the tide's direction will change and the current can carry the students away from struggle and resistance and into a supportive and nurturing environment. It is not necessary to spend large amounts of money to change the tide. Rather, an overall change in attitude is necessary. The

organization should change to meet the students needs, instead of it being the other way around (Tierney, 1992). A larger representation of minority employees within the institution could provide assistance in changing the tide. The need is great for more minority faculty and staff to be hired in order to properly meet students' needs and improve retention (Cervantes, 1988).

Academics includes not only learning specific coursework, but also faculty relations with the student within and outside the classroom. Minority students have different abilities just like other students. Along with these different abilities there are different learning styles that may have been developed within their culture. In a study focusing on retention, 11 successful Native American women enrolled in graduate school were interviewed. The women reported three specific sources of anxiety regarding academics: (1) the impersonal and analytic types of required writing; (2) the specialized vocabulary used in journals and lectures; and, (3) true-false and multiple-choice testing. The coping strategies used by these women were systematic studying; multimodal learning, using reading, writing, and speaking to understand and memorize; and reliance on Indian thinking skills such as focusing on applying theory to practical skills already gained and connecting theories immediately to personal knowledge of Native Americans (Macias, 1989).

Along with different learning strategies, different academic material may also affect the retention of minority students. For example, in the past traditional history courses included very little information on Native Americans. The information presented was usually from an Anglo perspective. This might distract a Native American from paying attention in a history class. Academic curricula should include relevant cultural issues, and perhaps specific information about Native American tribes.

In addition to course work, relevant practicum and internship experiences are important (Pipes, Westby and Inglebert, 1993). The academic world and the real world may be united through practica and internships. Even though cultural diversity is limited in many institutions of higher learning, that is not the case for our society as a whole. All students need to be prepared to work from a multicultural perspective. A true disservice is done to students if they only work within their own culture during school. Once they are on the job it might be too late to gain the needed knowledge or expertise.

Some rehabilitation programs are designed to include the "language and culture of the targeted groups and a practicum in an agency that serves members of the groups" (Armstrong, p. 24, 1992). This provides the students, minority or not, with a chance to work outside their own culture. The relationships minority students form with faculty are extremely important for their success. Non-Indian teachers can also play an important role in retaining minority students. Within the classroom, professors must be aware of potential communication barriers. They must also be aware of their own attitudes and try to be role models for promoting the success of all students. One often-recommended strategy is to use a variety of teaching styles in order to be responsive to all of the students.

The support cannot stop at the door of the classroom. Faculty must reach out to less verbal minority students by making appointments to talk with them. Frequent contact is necessary inside and outside the classroom. This can be done through mentoring or setting up a buddy system (Clark & Cheng, 1993). Programs like these are wonderful for improving the self-esteem of the student as well as encouraging them to attain their academic potential. Mentoring is effective in improving the success rate for all

students, not just minority students. To provide effective mentoring Adams and Wadsworth (1989) have suggested that information about cultural sensitivity and workshops on mentoring should be given to faculty on a regular basis, well planned retention initiatives with positive reinforcers should be used, faculty should be rewarded for their retention efforts, and the involvement of graduate students is essential.

Though it would be ideal to match minority students with a professor or graduate student with the same ethnicity and gender, this is probably impossible (Adams & Wadsworth, 1989). The minority faculty would be overloaded and it would limit the number of students who could be mentored. This relationship between the faculty and student is often the difference between the student's success and the student dropping out of school (Minority Student Today, 1995). The extra work for faculty is invaluable to the students and the institution; their efforts should be rewarded to reinforce their commitment. The institutions should reward faculty for teaching a diverse curriculum, developing out of class learning experiences, and similar activities. This will pay off for the institutions by providing a stable system of support for the minority students.

Student variables should not be overlooked or considered as something that is beyond the control of the institution. Instead, higher education should research and employ ideas to meet the needs of minority students and overcome the personal challenges that most minority students face. Empowering the Native American student to take charge of their academic success is part of successful retention. Academic advising sometimes engenders little student and faculty interaction. Minority students need more from their academic advisors so they can learn the system, understand the procedures and learn information that will help them

function successfully in school. This can be accomplished through the intensive advising of minority students, which can establish a foundation that nontraditional minority students need in order to become successful at the university.

Along with other minority students, Native American students often have many barriers and challenges to overcome in a higher education setting. This population is even more challenging because it is small in comparison to many other minority groups. This fact limits the ability of schools to have enough minority students and faculty for a supportive learning environment. Knowing what the barriers are is half the battle to finding ways to improve retention. Ferron (1989) proposed five common situations faced by Native American women in higher education:

(1) Women may have unique financial burdens;
(2) Native American women may often be asked to explain "what it means to be Native American";
(3) The women may be different in small ways (e.g., social pressures they feel and their psychological differences may affect retention);
(4) Lack of adequate and culturally sensitive child care; and,
(5) The need for more culturally sensitive counseling programs which involve tribal healers or elders to work with issues like alcohol abuse.

These problems are difficult to overcome without a support network on campus and an institution that is willing to help address these cultural barriers. Without support, these students will be more likely to drop out. A study at a southwestern university (Benjamin & Chambers, 1989) found that

of those Native American students who started as freshman in 1984, as of the fall of 1988, none had graduated. The study revealed several typical characteristics that promoted persistence for both non-Native and Native American students: Both typically had better persistence when they were traditional age students, they rate within top quarter of their high school class, they have higher ACT composite scores, were not admitted provisionally, and they have higher GPAs than non-persisters. Specific to the Native American population, persistence was not significantly better for students with higher high school grades than students with marginal grades, the class rank had less of an effect for persistence in Native American students in comparison to non-Native students, and although long-term persisters had a higher ACT score than the entering cohort, students from both ends of the range did not persist.

This study also found standards for college admissions, which have been in place and typically not changed for decades, were less reliable when predicting success in college for Native Americans (Benjamin & Chambers, 1989). To retain minority students, administrators need to take responsibility for making program adjustments, and the institution should promote empowerment for Native American students. Arizona State University requires funded Native American students to be in the program titled "Freshman Year Experience" which is a basic skills class used to support "at-risk" students (University of Arizona, 1996). Programs such as these promote a more positive attitude toward the minority students and can create a healthier attitude within the student. Considering these specific cultural issues and finding ways to overcome them creates pride within the students, and the university staff and faculty.

Model Programs and Best Practices

There have been many success stories regarding improving the recruitment and retention of minority students at colleges and universities. Rather than reinventing the wheel, models that have been used previously and have reported positive outcomes may be more effectively replicated.

Sometimes specific academic programs within the institutions find great success at creating their own minority recruitment and retention initiatives. Many times these programs seek funding outside the institution. The RAIN program (Retention for American Indian Nursing Students) works to increase the number of American Indian nurses who can provide culturally relevant health care. The program is funded by the Division of Nursing within the Indian Health Service. The program was implemented at the University of North Dakota in 1990. Since then, the retention rate for Native Americans has gone from 72% in the first year to 95% in 1995. The program's focus is on a holistic approach including: (1) fostering a sense of belonging; (2) intrusive monitoring; (3) aggressive advisement; (4) values clarification; and, (5) cultural awareness training. The program has had great success and the students have gone on to get good jobs and deliver quality care to their people (Minority Student Today, 1995).

The Department of Counseling and School Psychology at San Diego State University has a successful and innovative multicultural recruitment and retention program (Minority Student Today, p. unknown, 1995):

> "The most obvious outcomes of our innovations include: (a) $4.2 million in federal funding; (b) the successful recruitment, retention and graduation of culturally and linguistically diverse students, with

an average enrollment of 70-75% students of color over the last five years; (c) the financial support of 92% of our current students (n= 35); (d) more than 140 papers and workshops focused on culture-specific or multicultural school psychology over the last six years; (e) the development of departmental faculty who interact and read the culture-focused papers of our students of color; (f) the infusion of multicultural issues, content and processes in all school psychology courses; (g) specialization in multicultural, cultural and linguistic diversity and, (h) an increasingly diverse faculty including one tenure-track African-American male, one full time Chicano lecturer, and the part time (20-85%) involvement of African American, Latino(a), and American Indian faculty through teaching departmental as well as project courses."

San Diego State University implements nine elements that guide systematic change:

- Culturally compatible and culture-focused studies and processes.
- Continuous supervised field experiences.
- Mediation of the culture of graduate school with a summer orientation to clarify requirements and expectations.
- A critical mass of same-ethnic students and cohort cohesiveness of ethnic groups.
- Proximity to family; closeness promotes better success.
- Equitable admissions; criteria apply to all graduate applicants.
- Unobligated financial support involving grants, not loans.
- Sense of community, belongingness, and ownership; and

- Role models and mentors.

Other programs provide a broader institution-wide approach. Binghamton University uses a program called "The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program" which promotes the recruitment and retention of minorities and socio-economically deprived students; 193 students in five disciplines are supported by the program. The services include advising (academic, career and personal), counseling, program planning, and mentoring. Other support programs such as remedial courses and tutoring are available as needed. Enrichment supports include training in study skills, time management, stress management, test taking skills and reduction of test anxiety, mathematics and science skills, and the use of library and computer resources. The students also have bi-weekly support group meetings, and assigned research internships (Minority Student Today, 1995).

The University of Arizona promotes a program specifically for Native Americans. The Native American Resource Center provides academic support, retention services, and referrals to resources on campus, and extends services to a variety of programs. It also provides cultural activities that promote Native American activities.

At Florida Atlantic University, the Division of Student of Affairs and the Office of Minority Student Services have implemented aggressive recruitment and retention initiatives. The programs are the Tutorial Assistance Program, Transfer Outreach Program, College Success Course, Book Loan Program, College Success Center, Freshman Honors Ceremony, IMPAC Awards Ceremony, Society of Black Achievers & Hispanic Initiative Program, Orientation Workshops, College Reach-Out, Junior/Senior Day, Cultural Activities and a University-Wide Mentoring Program. These

programs provide a wide range of support to all minority students at the university (Minority Student Today, 1995).

Another way to tailor a program is to provide the education in the geographic area of the population being targeted. For example, Antioch University, in conjunction with the Tulalip Tribes and Marysville School District, provided a B.A. program in Teacher Certification and Human Resources on the reservation. The university offered on-site classes, full-time faculty, culturally enriched courses, scholarship funding, and language classes. The Marysville District provides practicum and student teacher experiences, access to computer labs, paid release time for Native American teaching assistants to complete their degrees, and priority hiring for Native American teachers. The tribe provides financial assistance, paid release time for tribal employees, money for living expenses and computers and classroom space on the reservation.

The success factors identified for this program are: 1) Relationships; 2) All students are Native American; 3) On-site student services; 4) Extended time to complete courses; and, 5) Course content and context. The program started in 1994 with 7 students; it now has 15, with 10 active full-time students. Programs such as these have been implemented at various universities throughout the United States. The outreach the university provides is an excellent way to reach nontraditional students and service students who would have otherwise gone without the higher education.

Recruiting and retaining minority students is more work than a garden, but it is a comparable process. Small seeds can produce large returns with time, attention, and commitment. As is apparent from this review of the literature on the recruitment and retention of minority students, there is no lack of good ideas. It is time to implement the ideas to benefit more

students. The success of minority students and support programs is contingent on the care and attention provided. Without it, students will not thrive; with it, students have a chance to bloom and reach their full potential.

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